UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

MIND, BODY, SPIRIT

Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness

Mind, Body, Spirit: Linking Lives for Health and Wholeness
UCC Wellness Ministries Newsletter

March-April 2021, Volume 6, Issue 2

REFLECTION: Lent and Easter

The Lenten season invites us to incorporate reflective spiritual practices into our patterns of daily life. The need for physical distancing and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought creative approaches to Lenten rituals and worship services.

Churches have conducted Ash Wednesday services by providing sprinklings with an evergreen branch, “Ash and Dash” drive-throughs in church parking lots, and placing decals with a cross drawn of ashes on car windshields.

Outdoor Easter sunrise services may be held - allowing for physical distancing in keeping with local community requirements and limits on size of group gatherings.

In this season of rebirth, may Easter’s Resurrection message renew and strengthen us as we journey through this pandemic.

COVID UPDATE

CDC: Information about the emerging variants of COVID-19 includes what you need to know and includes a map showing the location and number of cases by state in the US.

The CDC has a graphic illustrating proper mask use. It includes these key points:

Choose a mask with a **Nose Wire**

- A nose wire is a metal strip along the top of the mask
- Nose wires prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask.
- Bend the nose wire over your nose to fit close to your face.

Use a **Mask Fitter or Brace**

- Use a mask fitter or brace over a disposable mask or a cloth mask to prevent air from leaking around the edges of the mask.

Check that it **Fits Snugly** over your nose, mouth, and chin

- Check for gaps by cupping your hands around the outside edges of the mask.
- Make sure no air is flowing from the area near your eyes or from the sides of the mask.
- If the mask has a good fit, you will feel warm air come through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath.

Add Layers of material: 2 ways to layer

- Use a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric.
- Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask.
- The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face.

Make sure you can see and breathe easily.

Other CDC resources for those providing Wellness Ministries education:

Frequently asked questions about COVID vaccines

What to expect after getting a COVID-19 vaccination

Public Health Communications Collaborative (a Partnership of CDC Foundation, de Beaumont Foundation, and Trust for America's Health) has developed two downloadable

graphics to promote factual information about COVID-19 vaccination – why it's important to be vaccinated and what people should do after being vaccinated. The graphics are also formatted for downloading to Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

COVID-19 Vaccination Card: A vaccination card with the type of vaccine administered and dates given is provided to those who have received vaccinations. It is recommended you bring the card to your healthcare appointments. A word of caution: people have been posting copies of their cards on social media to share the news that they have been vaccinated. It is being advised not to post your card on sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. The card includes your name and date of birth. Someone who then finds a way to access your social security number can open a fake credit card in your name. Many vaccination sites are giving out stickers. It's a better choice to use if you want to post about your vaccinations.

HEALTH PROGRAMMING AND OBSERVATION DATES:

March:

Sunday, March 14, 2021: Daylight Savings Time: begins at 2:00 A.M. Remember to **"spring forward"** in the **spring** and set your **clocks forward** one hour (losing one hour of sleep).

National Sleep Awareness Week (March 14 - 20, 2021). Interestingly, National Sleep Awareness Week begins at the start of Daylight Savings Time – when most Americans lose an hour of sleep! The National Sleep Foundation offers articles and resources. One posted article highlights Sleep, Immune Health, and Vaccination.

Certified Nurses Day, celebrated on **March 19,** is an annual day of recognition dedicated to nursing professionalism, excellence, recognition, and service. If you have colleagues that are certified nurses, send them a greeting card to recognize their accomplishment and express gratitude for their commitment to excellence in nursing.

Colorectal Cancer Awareness: March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. As COVID-19 gripped the country, colorectal cancer screenings plummeted. The Alliance notes that it's *Time to Get Screening Back on Track*. Two new awareness brochures are available (first 100 copies free). Dress in Blue Day to bring awareness to this disease is Friday, March 5.

March is Women's History Month: Every year March is designated Women's History Month by Presidential proclamation. The month is set aside to honor women's contributions in American

history. The National Women's History Museum 2021 Women's History Month Resource Toolkit can be downloaded. A shared website of the Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum commemorates and encourages the study, observance and celebration of the vital role of women in American history.

April:

Parkinson's Awareness Month : The Parkinson's Foundation provides Living with Parkinson's, with eight helpful sections: New to Parkinson's, Managing Parkinson's, Legal/financial/insurance matters, PD Library, In Your Area, Resources and Support, My PD Story, and a Blog.

April 22, 2021 is Earth day. The Theme this year is Restore Our Earth. Earth Day Sunday 2021: Creation Justice Ministries is preparing its resource for Earth Day Sunday 2021. Watch the site for the downloadable resource.

March is the time to begin planning for your church's activities that focus on care of creation.

WELLNESS MINISTRIES MOMENT: *CHRONIC ILLNESS DURING A PANDEMIC*

Wellness Ministries often provide education to faith communities related to diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, cancer, and heart disease. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on prevention, detection, treatment, and ongoing monitoring of persons with chronic illnesses. Many people have postponed or cancelled outpatient visits and rescheduled them to telemedicine appointments.

One study, The Invisible Epidemic: Neglected Chronic Disease Management During COVID-19 evaluated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rate of performance of screening and prevention services related to diabetes and hyperlipidemia and assessed the implications of these changes.

Data in a webinar offered by National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) – available as a webinar for viewing or a pdf file - noted that 41% of US adults have avoided medical care during the pandemic because of concerns about COVID-19; 12% avoided urgent/emergency care and 31.5% avoided routine care.

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors offers a tips and information factsheet for those with chronic illness.

The CDC offers Telehealth Interventions to Improve Chronic Disease that provides strategies, tools and resources related to live videoconferencing, remote patient monitoring, audio, and mobile health approaches.

ON-LINE EDUCATION AND RESOURCES:

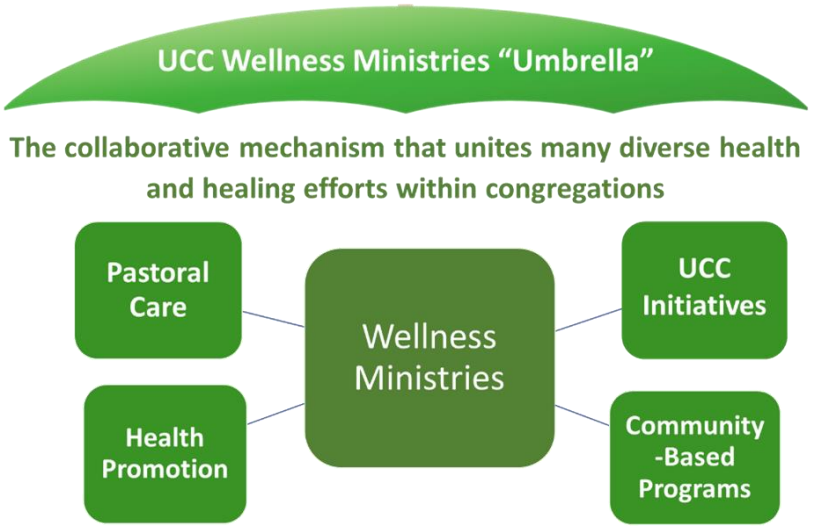
Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program is offering **Virtual Day Retreat 2021**, titled, “From Darkness into Light: Encountering the Heart of Christ” on **Saturday, April 17, 2021.**

The Southern New England Conference of the UCC has on-line resources for faith communities:

1. A panel of health professionals shares updates on COVID-19 information from MA, CT and RI, including vaccination information.
2. Health and Wellness Minister Debbie Ringen offers an informative article, Should We Resume In-Person Worship.

UCC NEWS:

UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES encompass the many programs that may be developed to promote wellness and health at the level of local congregations, UCC Conferences, and the national UCC. This diagram illustrates the “umbrella” image used to denote this overarching coordination of multiple aspects of health and healing efforts.


UCC Wellness Ministries “Umbrella”
The collaborative mechanism that unites many diverse health and healing efforts within congregations
Pastoral Care
Health Promotion
Wellness Ministries
UCC Initiatives
Community -Based Programs

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Examples of programs in these four categories (while not all-inclusive) help to illustrate the expanse and diversity of Wellness Ministries:

Pastoral Care

- Visitation
- Prayer Shawls
- Cards, Notes, Calls
- Transportation

UCC Initiatives

- UCC Mental Health Network: Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged (WISE)
- UCC Disabilities Ministries:

- Meal Deliveries
- Healing Services - eg. Longest Night
- Meditation Practice
- Bereavement Teams
- Prayer Circles

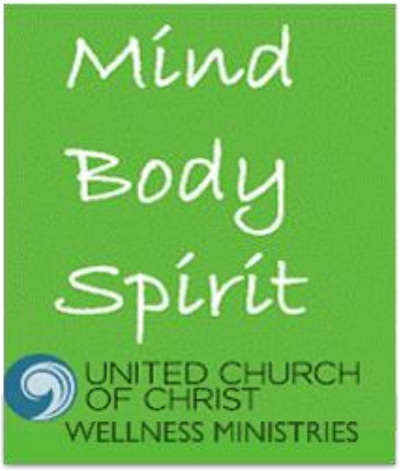
Health Promotion

- Healthy and Safe Eating
- Walking Programs
- Meditation, Yoga & Tai Chi
- Safety Education
- Support of those with chronic illness, including HIV & AIDS
- Advance Care Planning
- CPR, AED, and Naloxone Administration

Accessible to All (A2A)
- Our Whole Lives (OWL) / Sexuality and Our Faith sexuality education
- LGBTQ+ Ministries: Open and Affirming (ONA)
- UCC HIV & AIDS Network (UCAN)
- UCC Disaster Response Ministries
- UCC Refugee and Asylum ministries

Community-Based Programs

- Ministry to the Homeless
- Meal Kitchens
- Food Pantries
- Clothing Closet
- AA, NA, Al-Anon, and other recovery support groups



Exciting new UCC Wellness Ministries projects:

Content is being updated on the new UCC.org website. A short Overview of Wellness Ministries vignette will be posted soon. The UCC Wellness Ministries Manual is in the process of being redesigned and updated into a Toolkit. As segments are completed, they will be posted on the UCC website for the benefit of all of us doing this work. Have an idea? Want to be a co-editor or reviewer? Contact Peggy Matteson, (peggymatteson@cox.net) who is leading this initiative; she invites you to discuss your participation.

GENERAL SYNOD 33 UPDATE:

Information is now posted at generalsynod.org for General Synod 33, July 11-18, 2021. Workshop applications are now open. We encourage you to consider submitting a Wellness Ministries topic.

KEEP CONNECTED:

Visit our Facebook and Linked-In pages.
Post comments or share information about your health ministries; join in conversations.

Editor's Note:

Future issues: Have a wellness ministry example you want to share with colleagues?

Contact me, Alyson Breisch at alyson.breisch@gmail.com.

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